

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

### **Listing of Claims:**

1.(canceled)            A salt platform, comprising:  
at least one hub, said hub having at least one locking element.

2.(canceled)    The salt platform of claim 1 further comprising at least one radial brace, the radial brace having at least one end with a locking element, the locking elements of the radial brace and the hub engaged to secure the hub to the radial brace.

3.(allowed)    A salt platform, comprising:  
a plurality of hubs, each hub having at least one locking element;  
at least one radial brace, the radial brace having first and second ends, each end having a locking element to engage a locking element in a hub to secure the radial brace and hub together wherein the locking element in the hub includes a T-shaped slot and the locking element in the radial brace includes a T-shaped portion received in the T-shaped slot.

4.(allowed)    The salt platform of Claim 3 wherein the hubs each are provided with a plurality of locking elements formed by locking slots about an outer circumference thereof.

5            5.(allowed)    The salt platform of Claim 3 further comprising a plurality of curved  
braces  
having locking elements to secure a curved brace to a hub.

10           6.(allowed)    The salt platform of Claim 3 wherein the hubs each define a cylindrical

socket for receiving vertical support members.

7.(amended) The salt platform of Claim [3] 5 wherein each of said curved braces has at least one pipe holder for receiving a pipe section.

5 8. (canceled) The salt platform of Claim 3 wherein the locking element in the hub includes a T-shaped slot and the locking element in the radial brace includes a T-shaped portion received in the T-shaped slot.

10 9. (allowed) The salt platform of Claim 3 wherein the locking element in the hub includes a plurality of T-shaped slots distributed about an outer circumference of the hub.

10. (amended) The salt platform of Claim 9 wherein the plurality of T-shaped slots are distributed about the circumference at 30 degree angles to adjacent T-shaped slots.

15 11. (allowed) The salt platform of Claim 3 wherein the hub further includes a locking bar at an end of said T-shaped slot.

12. (allowed) The salt platform of Claim 3 further including at least one stub spoke, said stub spoke having a locking member and a pipe holder.

20 13. (allowed) The salt platform of Claim 12 wherein the stub spoke further has a thinned section connecting the locking member and the pipe holder to permit pivotal motion therebetween.

25 14. (allowed) A method of assembling a salt platform comprising the steps of:  
inserting the locking element of a first member into a locking element of a hub to  
support a salt grid to lock the first member and hub together wherein the step of inserting the  
locking member of a first member includes the step of inserting a locking member of a curved

brace.

15.(allowed) The method of Claim 14 wherein the step of inserting the locking member of a first member includes the step of inserting a locking member of a radial brace.

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16. (canceled) The method of Claim 14 wherein the step of inserting the locking member of a first member includes the step of inserting a locking member of a curved brace.

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17. (allowed) The method of Claim 14 wherein the step of inserting the locking member of a first member includes the step of inserting a locking member of a stub spoke.

18. (allowed) The method of Claim 14 further comprising the step of inserting a pipe section in a pipe holder formed on the first member.

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19. (allowed) A salt platform comprising:

at least one hub, said hub having at least one locking element; and

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at least one connector, the connector having at least one end with a locking element, the locking elements of the connector and the hub engaged to secure the hub to the connector, the locking element of the hub having a locking slot with a key hole cross-section and a locking bar, the locking element of the connector having a T-shape portion and a flexible catch, the T-shape portion sliding into the locking slot of the hub until the flexible catch deflects over the locking bar to lock the connector to the hub.

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20. (allowed) The salt platform of claim 19 wherein the connector is a radial brace.

21. (allowed) The salt platform of claim 19 wherein the connector is a stub spoke, the stub spoke having a pipe holder for receiving a pipe section and a thinned section to allow the pipe section to pivot relative the locking element.

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22. (allowed) The salt platform of claim 19 wherein the locking slot has first and second

facing parallel proximate surfaces and first and second facing parallel spaced surfaces defining the key hole cross-section, the proximate surfaces and spaced surfaces being parallel, the connector having first and second opposed parallel proximate surfaces, first and second opposed parallel inner spaced surfaces and first and second opposed parallel outer spaced surfaces, the first and second opposed parallel proximate surfaces and first and second opposed parallel outer spaced surfaces forming the T-shape portion, the first and second opposed parallel proximate surfaces, first and second opposed parallel inner spaced surfaces and first and second opposed parallel outer spaced surfaces being parallel, the first and second facing parallel proximate surfaces of the locking slot and the first and second opposed parallel proximate surfaces of the connector sliding against each other as the hub and connector are engaged.

23.(allowed) A salt platform, comprising:  
a plurality of hubs, each hub having at least one locking element;  
at least one radial brace, the radial brace having first and second ends, each end having a locking element to engage a locking element in a hub to secure the radial brace and hub together, and;  
further comprising a plurality of curved braces having locking elements to secure a curved brace to a hub.